R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 015 207 TE 000 187

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS EDUCATION.

BY- SQUIRE, JAMES R.

PUB DATE 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.08 25P.

DESCRIPTORS- *CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, *CURRICULUM RESEARCH, *ENGLISH CURRICULUM, *ENGLISH INSTRUCTION, *LANGUAGE ARTS, COGNITIVE PROCESSES, COMPOSITION (LITERARY), GRAMMAR, LANGUAGE, LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE, READING, TEACHING METHODS, SEQUENTIAL PROGRAMS,

IN THE PAST DECADE, ENGLISH AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT HAS BEEN REASSESSED TO ESTABLISH PRIORITIES, SPECIFY THE TASKS OF THE ENGLISH TEACHER, AND CREATE EFFECTIVE SEQUENTIAL, INTEGRATED PROGRAMS WHICH BALANCE CONTENT AND SKILLS. THIS SUMMARY REPORT CONSIDERS EMERGING CONCEPTS IN THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMPOSITION, AND THEIR APPLICATION IN ACTUAL PROGRAMS. THE LANGUAGE SECTION STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF LINGUISTIC INSIGHTS INTO THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE AND OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT TO THE CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION IN LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE SKILLS. CHANGES IN THE CONCEPTS AND TEACHING OF COMPOSITION ARE DISCUSSED NEXT WITH EMPHASIS ON SEQUENTIAL PROGRAMS BASED ON PSYCHOLOGICAL PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION WHICH CONCENTRATE ON THE COMPOSING PROCESS ITSELF AND THE RHETORICAL PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZING AND EXPRESSING IDEAS. NEW CONCEPTS AND TEACHING MODELS IN LITERATURE ARE THEN ELABORATED, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHICH STRESS RICH AND EXPANDING LITERARY EXPERIENCES AS CENTRAL TO EDUCATING THE IMAGINATION OF THE CHILD AND TO DEVELOPING LIFELONG READING HABITS. FINALLY, A SECTION ON THE EMERGING METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH ENUMERATES AND EXPLAINS FIVE BASIC TRENDS WHICH HAVE RESULTED FROM NEW THEORIES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING. THIS DOCUMENT IS CHAPTER 3 IN FORREST E. CONNOR AND WILLIAM J. ELLENA (EDS.), "CURRICULUM HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS" WASHINGTON, D.C., AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, 1967. (DL)

ED015207

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Reprinted from

Curriculum Handbook
for
School Administrators

Chapter 3

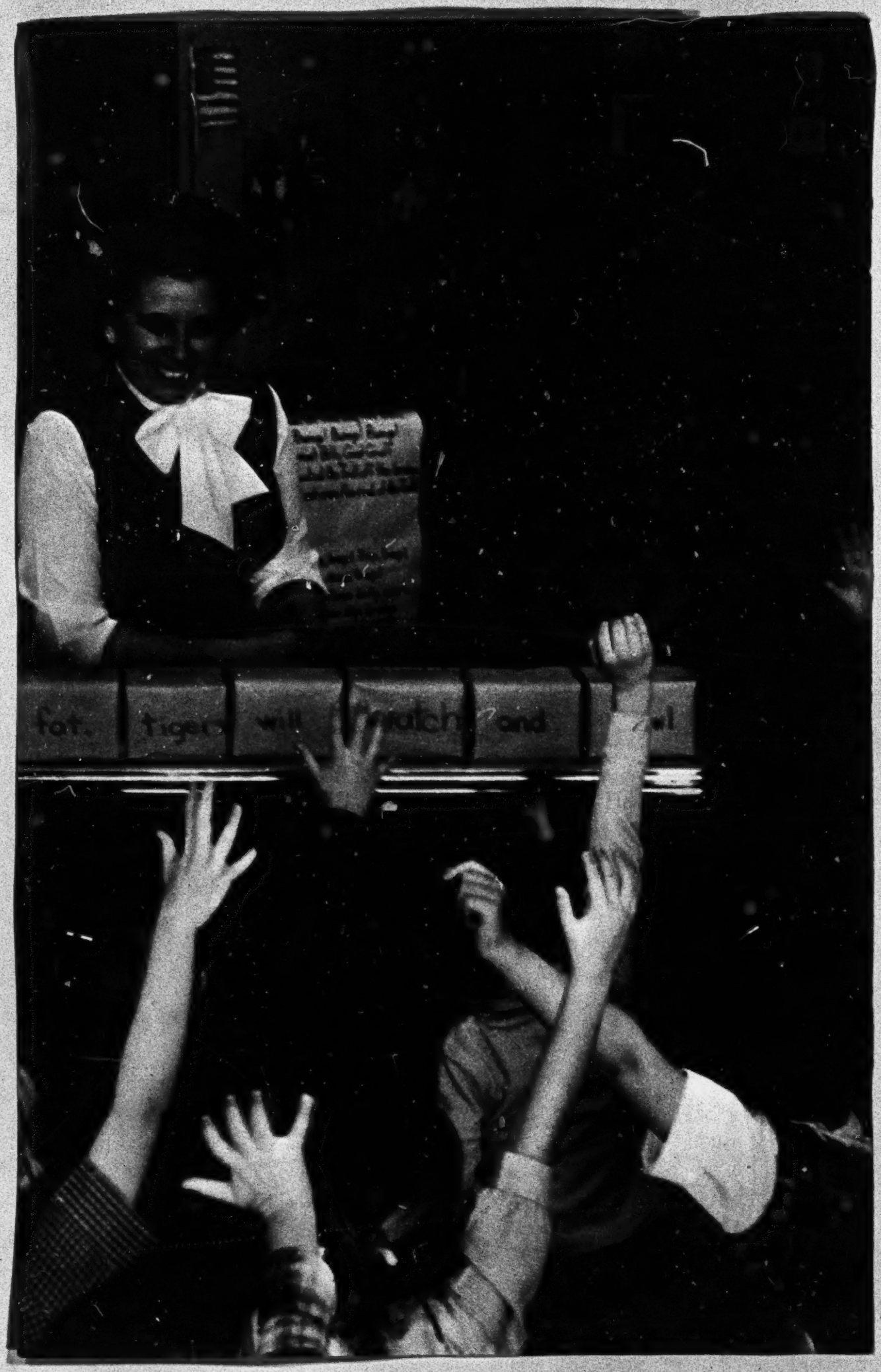
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS EDUCATION

James R. Squire

Professor of English
University of Illinois, Urbana

TE 000 187

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY William J. Ellena, Editor TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."


fat. tiger will scratch and

3

English Language Arts Education

The past decade has seen a continued search for clarification of English as a subject for study in schools—clarification that establishes proper priorities, that specifies concretely what the English teacher is to do, and that increases opportunities for developing good sequential programs from elementary grades through high school to college undergraduate levels. In major experimental curriculum centers throughout the country, a number of models for the curriculum in English are under study. In at least one center, the model is a language-based curriculum and composition and literature are treated as the two highest and most artistic manifestations of language; in a second, separate but related strands of language, literature, and composition are being organized into a K-12 sequence. Another popular model is the literature-centered curriculum, with the sequence based on the reading of particular works and with study of writing, speaking, and language growing from reading and discussion. Also receiving attention, especially at the elementary level, is a curriculum emphasizing cognitive processes, the mental operations involved in reading and in the uses of oral and written language. These and other models are being tested continually. In the next few years experimentation with many patterns of organizing instruction in English rather than the adoption of any uniform national pattern will probably be evident.

Despite the diversity in approach and sometimes in definition, curriculum builders now widely accept certain principles. Primary is their recognition that English instruction involves both content and skills. Regardless of emphasis or approach, curriculum leaders today agree that the teaching of English is concerned with the content of literature, language, and composition (i.e., the principles of rhetoric), and with the supporting skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In most programs, skills are developed as the content is explored.

To overstress the skills of English to the exclusion of its content places an almost insurmountable barrier between elementary and secondary programs and provides no intellectually valid context for teaching skills. For example, when the teaching of reading is overstressed during elementary years, it can too easily slide into a separate program alienated from other English instruction and organized without commitment to any content. On the other hand, overemphasis on the content of language and literature, especially at the secondary level, can lead to the neglect or even the abandonment of either reading skills or the uses of oral language.

Though imbalances are possible in either content or skill, a curriculum limited to the teaching of skills may create greater dangers. Since the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, and listening is quite properly the goal of general education, everything contributing to this goal can be regarded as "English"; and every teacher can be regarded as "a teacher of English." Such a view explains attempts to stress the basic processes of communication in teaching in all subject areas, but it also may partly account for the insufficient emphasis on specialized preparation in English. Elementary teachers, for instance, who spend 40 to 60 percent of their time teaching skills embraced under the general term *English,* spend only 8 percent of their preprofessional course time on preparation for this task (17, p. 96). Faulty preparation to teach content, as well as skills, also contributed to the findings reported in Robert C. Pooley's three-year Wisconsin study of K-12 English programs that few planned literary experiences were introduced between the end of grade 3 and the beginning of high school. In the absence of any concern with literature, elementary teachers stress reading almost exclusively as a set of skills. Once children become independent readers after the primary grades, reading becomes only practice to maintain or improve efficiency and a means to gather information in other content fields. It is important that all reading and study skills needed by children be carefully taught; it is no less important that the content of English receive necessary attention.

To rejuvenate awareness that English is a content subject as well as a skills subject is one of the major aims of the profession's current efforts in curriculum. An awakening to the integral relationship of the two parts of English is directly related to new understanding of concept development and the psychology of thinking. In proper balance, skills and content should help lead each student to use language effectively and to find in literature a storehouse of human understanding, as well as extend each individual's knowledge about language, literature, and composition.

Emerging Concepts and Applications in Teaching Language

No aspect of English is changing more dramatically than the teaching of oral and written language. Insights into the nature of language and language development of children have modified our basic perceptions about the content that we teach and how we should organize instruction.

In the past, many teachers taught English as a series of separate subjects: reading from 9:00 to 9:20 A.M. and spelling from 11:00 to 11:20 A.M., or literature on Monday, grammar on Tuesday, and composition on Thursday. They failed to see that the processes of reading, spelling, speech, and applying usage and grammar are bound together through an awareness of basic linguistic processes. Teachers strengthen the entire K-12 sequence when they relate its various parts to a central view of language study.

The field of reading can serve to illustrate how language is a major consideration in everything we teach. New programs in reading are based not only on physiological, psychological, social, and experiential factors, but on linguistic factors as well. In teaching children to read, we are newly aware that we are teaching the mastery of a written language system. Most linguists and many reading specialists agree that programs of beginning reading should be based on the consistent structures of sound in the English language as we know them to exist. To achieve proficiency in reading and spelling, the child must learn how the sounds of English are translated into written symbols, something quite different from the reverse process of translating specific but arbitrary letters into specific sounds.

To help children most effectively, teachers need a basic understanding of the relationship between pronunciation and reading and the systems of phonemics and phonetics. Linguist C. C. Fries calls

reading "the process of transfer from *auditory* signs for language symbols, which the child has already learned, to the *visual* signs for the same symbols." The ways in which the child learns to associate sounds with written symbols in reading then relate to the ways he masters spelling. Clearly a sharpening of relationships between reading and spelling is emerging from present work on finding the true consistencies of sounds and letters in the language codes.

When a child enters school, oral language is *the* language. It is the only method of communication he knows. Instruction in written language and reading must accordingly be built upon the oral language that the child brings to school, not on more formal written language that is unrelated to what the child uses every day. Hence, increased attention is given to aspects of language as these are involved in teaching the child to read; e.g., dialect study of the culture groups whence children come, study of children's language habits, readiness instruction that includes more attention to speaking and listening, and a relaxation of rigid vocabulary control so that sentences more closely resemble those the child hears.

The importance of oral language is best illustrated in programs for teaching the disadvantaged. Head Start instruction throughout the nation, the Wilmington Project on Changing Neighborhoods, the Bernstein studies at the University of London—all demonstrate the importance of two-way oral language in improving the thinking and language skills of children. Through the work of sociolinguists, schools are recognizing that teaching English to the disadvantaged involves not piecemeal remedial processes but the teaching of a second, overlaying language system in addition to the one such children habitually use. Some specialists recommend that the schools, particularly in the primary grades, conduct much classroom learning in the oral language familiar to children, even while attempting to develop children's facility in using language patterns of a more socially approved type.

Abundant evidence shows, too, that our early and most successful readers generally profit most from a rich background of oral language. For poor readers today, as well as for disadvantaged children, the path to improvement may lie not so much with remedial work in reading, but with frequent and effective oral experiences to make up for deprivation. How far existing programs need to go in strengthening experiences in speaking and listening is suggested by a recent study finding that conventional language arts textbooks for children devote less than 25 percent of their content to speech activities(3).

Oral language is not the only aspect of language instruction receiving attention today. Of equal importance in improving elementary instruction are applications of studies of sentences used by children, studies revealing that most children beginning school, even those from disadvantaged areas, have mastered orally most of the sentence patterns they will use even as mature adults. No longer is the teacher seen as one who presents a new, correct language; rather, his role is one of expanding and activating the linguistic repertoire which the child already possesses. New reading materials introduce children to a rich variety of sentences; wide reading of many books helps supplement and extend a restricted basal program; and experiences with oral literature provide children with rich and imaginative uses of language. These are some hallmarks of our new language programs.

Ability to manipulate the possible variations within the English sentence distinguishes the articulate child from the inarticulate, the effective from the ineffective. The implications are clear. The need in schools, especially in elementary schools, is for more emphasis on sentence building through purposeful discussion, conversation, reporting, and dramatizing and less emphasis on sentence analysis; more stress on achieving variety in writing and speech and less on restricted correcting of printed sentences that seldom resemble the child's own.

Nor is meaning forgotten in newer approaches to language study. Since studies show that children entering school have spent, on the average, more than 1,500 hours before a television set, hearing thousands of new words with only limited understanding, attention to the meaning in communication becomes increasingly critical. The newer English programs display extensive concern with multilevel meanings of words in various contexts, with persuasive language, with metaphorical or imaginative language, with informational and evaluative language, and with the purposes to which language is put.

Literature, too, is important in the language development of young people. As Ruth Strickland has observed, "It is through exposure to literature that children learn the possibilities of their language. In everyday communication, they hear the language used for utilitarian purposes. In literature they encounter it in more artistic and creative forms. . . . And listening to the teacher's reading of good literature is especially important to the child who comes from a substandard language background."(26)

If understanding of the nature of language provides a new per-

spective on the development of children's language, it also makes us ask what should be taught about language itself and how. Most English specialists have clearly rejected the notion that the only purpose of language study is the improvement of writing, speaking, listening, and reading. Language, as the study of one of man's most characteristic modes of behavior, has a content which is profitably taught in itself, much as is the content of biology or history. The questions before the profession today are, How much study, when, and of what kind?

The study of the history of the language as related to dialect growth and change and evolution of its structure is one facet currently receiving new attention. From such study young people learn how our language has changed and what forces have promoted change and continue to influence the development of the language. Some specialists argue for attention to linguistic history early in the curriculum. In considering the expansion of the American West, for example, fifth-grade children may trace the westward movement of the English language and the changes which occur: the pioneer terms, the Spanish influences, the regional place names, the regional pronunciations like "creek" and "crick." For the secondary school, special units on the history of language are being developed to accompany the study of literary history. One new development is the publication of selected historical texts showing pupils the forms in which English has appeared over the centuries, i.e., selected printed passages and authoritative oral (or recorded) readings of Old English and Middle English passages.

Young people who will live in the rich diversity of the American culture need to develop deep respect for the variety of English tongues. A special concern is the teaching about English and American dialects, the variations of English deriving from social and geographical influences. Awareness of linguistic differences, of what such differences signify and do not signify, is important to a mobile population in a land characterized by social change. Listening to recordings of dialect samples in intermediate classrooms; studying dialects of "live" speakers in the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools; and studying lexicography, that is, dictionaries, dictionary makers, and what dictionaries are for—all are important.

One product of the "great dictionary controversy" of the early sixties has been an increase in the attention schools give to the nature of English usage. Modern teachers are trying to explain what appropriate language is: language that effectively communicates meaning to a specific, stipulated audience. To understand this,

children must learn that the effectiveness of language varies with the context in which it is used, and our programs must help them learn to adjust their own language to each immediate occasion while they are, for other purposes, learning the common usage of educated adults in their own region.

The grammar of English is now studied as subject matter in its own right, not as a means of improving speech and writing. Forty years of research in education has shown that the study of grammar, when narrowly conceived, does not contribute observably to the improvement of the way students write. Although experimental efforts to demonstrate the relationship between grammar and writing continue, specialists today argue for grammar instruction which contributes to the child's understanding of the structure and operation of his language rather than an allegedly "functional" instruction which confuses grammar and usage. Some newer approaches attempt to improve the possibilities of transfer of grammatical study to actual use. The creation of sentences (the writing of examples of structure) has values that mere analysis of someone else's sentences does not have. The rewriting of papers enables students to use grammatical knowledge at the moment when it may have the greatest potential for transfer.

At least three grammars are being introduced in new school programs—scholarly, traditional grammar; structural grammar; and transformational grammar. Until recently none of these had been widely taught as a discipline in schools. The "school grammar" of recent decades, too often a confused blend of usage and grammatical rules, has been referred to as "traditional" grammar because it was traditionally taught in the schools, but seldom in a coherent, systematic way. Such "school grammar" has been universally denounced by scholars. Specialists are not yet agreed on what kind of grammar should be presented in the classroom, but they generally agree that teachers themselves should understand at least two methods of grammatical description, if only to free themselves from dependence on a single approach.

Structural or descriptive grammar provides a valid description of the relationship among words and the patterns of word groups (syntax); the forms of words (morphology); and the sounds of the language, including such features as intonation, stress, and pause (phonology). Transformational grammar, on the other hand, is a rigorous description of the regular, internalized structural and semantic systems through which individuals produce English sentences. Scholars differ in their views of these two newer grammars.

Some regard transformational grammar as a logical extension of structural approaches, while others view the two as incompatible in many ways. Most modern programs of language instruction derive from one or both of these grammars; transformational analysis has perhaps attracted the most recent attention.

Still widespread are differences of opinion about the place of grammatical instruction during the first six years of school. Many specialists argue that schools should vigorously provide for expanding and enhancing the child's own repertoire of linguistic behavior rather than for studying theoretical principles of grammar. These specialists argue that to pause for grammar study is to deny the time needed for stimulating language growth. Programs of instruction should provide for creative expression as well as for the more practical uses of language. The teacher must understand that children need a wide range of experience in conversation, discussion, reporting, and dramatizing which will build toward later attempts to generalize about language. The formal study of English grammar should be delayed until secondary school when, according to these observers, children would be so conscious of the possibilities of language that the study of grammar would not encourage empty verbalization.

Some recently published textbooks, however, introduce sequential study of grammar early in the intermediate grades. For some children, such carefully organized programs may provide useful and interesting knowledge about the nature and operation of language without necessarily interfering with language growth. Supporters of this approach argue that there are limits to what schools can do to stimulate language growth, which, it is believed, is but one part of total growth.

In any event, however it is introduced, a carefully defined sequence of grammar instruction is characteristic of many new programs being developed in school districts and in textbooks, whether the sequence begins in the late elementary school or in high school. The curriculum study center at the University of Oregon, for example, introduces principles of transformational grammar in grades 7 and 8, then expands its concerns over the subsequent years to include such aspects of language as its history and regional and social variations.

Concerned about the needless repetition of instruction in language from grade to grade and aware of the confused relationship between knowledge about and use of language which fragmented many programs of the past, curriculum specialists are moving to create curriculums in language which inform young people about

language while teaching them to use it more effectively. Because of the help offered by numerous institutes and inservice programs, elementary and secondary teachers should know more about the full dimensions of language and schools of the future should be far better prepared to evaluate the purposes, possibilities, and limitations of the new programs and textbooks prepared for children's use and to create and teach language programs in keeping with what is known and is appropriate to their pupils.

Emerging Concepts and Applications in Teaching Composition

Programs today tend to stress planned, cumulative experiences in writing. A remarkable development recently has been the stress on composition at almost every grade level, including even the primary school. An important byproduct of initial teaching alphabet programs in reading, although the occurrence is not confined to these programs, has been the stimulation of much writing by children. Introduced to new words and new ideas by their early independence in reading, children begin writing very early. Experiences with new media and new books also generate an early interest in writing. The "writing approach to beginning reading" is based on the dictation and reading of children's own stories almost from the first moments of school. Such early creative experiences serve in turn as a foundation of literary sensitivity—children write their own literature, read and listen to the literature read by others, and shape their experiences through artistic expression.

At the intermediate level, writing continues and is related both to reading and to oral expression of ideas. Although still uncertain about how much direct writing instruction to give in the upper elementary school, specialists agree that both imaginative and objective writing should play some part at this level.

New programs in the secondary school, while devoting more attention to writing than did the old, place more emphasis on the composing process itself, often by using short selections for analysis that develop conceptual understanding of how the material is put together. Often considerable help is given in planning and organizing a paper and in revising and polishing. Instruction in spelling, drills on conventions of writing, vocabulary work, grammar, the study of English usage—these are not substitutes for writing, for they too often direct attention away from writing itself. Particularly in junior high school programs, where teachers traditionally have

substituted so-called exercises for actual writing, new programs are resulting in significant changes.

Formal statements stipulating what amount of practice in writing should be required have not had widespread support. The "theme a week" proposal of a few years back was more an appeal for increased attention to composition than a carefully reasoned position. No doubt students should do some writing almost every week. But heavy teaching loads still handicap teachers who could otherwise offer their students thoughtful, creative instruction. Because of these heavy loads, few teachers can develop major weekly assignments with care and find time to evaluate adequately the mountain of themes that accumulate. When they casually introduce unmotivated weekly writing assignments, their pupils seem to experience little permanent growth in ability to write. In such circumstances, it is preferable that students write less frequently if their writing is therefore more thoughtfully and carefully conceived and their teachers have time to read papers carefully and offer constructive help. According to one recent study of successful programs, only 15.7 percent of high school time is spent on composition, an emphasis considerably less than most authorities would recommend, but perhaps not inadequate if the time is carefully spent (23, p. 192).

Writing of a composition by a student and reading of it by a teacher should be a process which begins at the level of ideas, not at the level of conventions of sentence analysis. Since any writer must have something meaningful to say before writing an acceptable essay, even a child's writing should indicate that he has done some thoughtful reading or that his personal experiences have led him to form some thoughtful conclusions. Writing is a skill which demands constant practice, but this practice must be in expressing ideas and feelings. Thus the emphases in a program of composition are on wide reading, discussion, and the relationship between writing and the reading of literature. It is hardly possible, then, to separate writing from reading and literature. Children who have read and experienced little, and who have thought or fancied even less, may find the writing of a meaningful story, poem, report, or essay well beyond their powers.

Little evidence exists that reliance on workbook exercises or drills or meticulous sleuthing through student papers for missing commas or misspelled words encourages growth in writing ability. Indeed, an education overemphasizing mechanics and conventions in writing can lead to other problems. A student sacrificing ideas in

order to write what he considers to be a "perfect" or "safe" paper—one which the teacher can't attack because it is written in simple declarative sentences, all properly punctuated and capitalized—has missed the point; he has not understood that the purpose of the communication should determine the structures and conventions of writing and not vice versa. And the teacher is derelict in grading papers if he fails to indicate that thinking and organizing are matters of primary importance and that errors in mechanics are not evils of and by themselves but are simply obstructions to the flow of thought within the essay which should be overcome through revision.

Sequence, now seen as important to good composition programs, must be based on psychological rather than logical patterns of organization. Long before Jerome Bruner evolved his carefully considered construction of a spiral curriculum, philosopher Alfred North Whitehead discussed the "rhythms of education" at various education levels and insisted that the sequence through which effective education is best achieved is not necessarily that leading from the simple to the complex. It is still common for teachers to argue that children should master the paragraph before proceeding to the essay, should master the sentence before proceeding to the paragraph, should master the parts of speech before proceeding to the English sentence. But linguists have now reiterated that the structural and semantic properties of words have meaning only in larger language units—phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. Parts of the communicative process can be studied only in relation to the whole communication. Modern elementary teachers find that children's ability to compose is enhanced by experiences in building and manipulating sentences, in clarifying sentences, and in changing them to achieve a pleasing variety or repetitive sound, often before much word study has been introduced. Similarly, today's secondary teachers learn that concepts of the paragraph and even longer units of writing develop slowly and require recurrent study.

The usual method of writing instruction followed in many schools proceeds from student writing of compositions to teacher "correction" and subsequent return of the essays—in many cases to be revised and resubmitted. No doubt this time-honored system will continue to be practiced by many teachers. It emphasizes instruction through correction after writing and is supported by the belief that success depends upon adequate annotation of student papers. Unfortunately, recent studies of teachers' annotations on students' writings have revealed startling deficiencies. Examination of one sampling of thousands of papers returned to students revealed that

one third had not been annotated in any way; in another third, only "gross errors" of spelling and usage were corrected(23, p. 193). The basic problems of expressing and organizing ideas, problems which should receive major stress, are too often ignored.

Without a doubt, heavy pupil loads often prevent teachers from carefully annotating themes. If as much as 8.6 minutes is the median time required to mark a 250-word paper intended to teach "writing and thinking"(8, p. 4), then a teacher with 125 to 150 students, the national average in secondary schools, will devote about 19 hours per week to correction of papers if he requires students to write a "theme a week." Few teachers can sustain such an outlay of time. When teaching loads cannot be reduced substantially, most specialists recommend giving writing assignments less frequently. But they emphasize that the annotation of this writing should be focused more upon quality of ideas and organization and effectiveness of presentation than upon conventions of writing (22).

Nevertheless, instruction in composition after the act of writing may be less effective than what the teacher does with children before they write. The composition assignment is thus developed with care, and students are urged to explore the composing problems involved before putting pen to paper, not to write in a rush and repent at leisure. Extended writing laboratory periods give classes sufficient time to develop ideas before beginning to write and also afford the teacher opportunity to assist individuals with problems in composing at the time when problems occur.

New programs are placing great emphasis, also, on both principles of rhetoric—that is, the principles of effectiveness in expression and communication—and methods of rhetorical analysis derived from the restudy of classical rhetoricians and from modern scholarship in communication. In a few programs, too, teachers are relating such principles and methods to both oral and written discourse, seeing in the composition program a way of developing understandings pertinent to speech as well as writing. Although they have only limited value, models of good writing by both students and adults are frequently introduced. The use of models may help children recognize the unity of parts in a whole composition before they emulate in their own writing the models provided.

Attention to the rhetorical problems of composing means greater attention to the "inventing" of subtle topics and to methods of organizing and expressing ideas. Before ideas are organized and expressed, however, problems in determining a speaker's attitude

toward his subject, his purpose, and his awareness of audience and selection of detail must be stressed in modern programs. Most important of all in rhetorical approaches is the stress placed on composing as the writer's way of shaping and communicating ideas through language.

Establishing arbitrary differences between personal (imaginative, subjective) and practical (factual, expository, business) writing seem less important than providing balanced experiences in writing during a total curricular sequence. On certain occasions, students wish to describe their feelings; on others, to narrate vicarious or personal experiences or convey information; on still others, to grapple with abstract ideas and to analyze the ideas and perceptions of others. In the hands of children, the impersonal can become personal, the expository become imaginative. Exaggerated stress on allegedly different modes of adult discourse, the tendency to avoid imaginative writing, and the practice of overemphasizing one particular kind of analytical writing represent considerations that are external rather than internal (e.g., the need to communicate). Children progressing through the schools should have a variety of opportunities to write; inevitably their writing will become increasingly impersonal as experience and maturity lead them toward control of more abstract discourse. Yet reasonable balance between the development of personal and of practical writing should be provided.

Writing is the attempt of an individual first to clarify for himself and then to express his personal attitudes, ideas, and feelings. Here, perhaps more than at most points in the curriculum, emphasis should be placed on the individual. Those programs in writing that subordinate the individual either to abstract and sometimes fallacious notions about composition or to the group—in what is assigned, in what is expressed, in what is taught, in how sequence is achieved—will ultimately be less successful in encouraging effective composing than are programs designed to free individual expression.

Emerging Concepts and Applications in Teaching Literature

For many years now the quality of literary experiences provided children and young people has concerned the profession. The inadequacy of organized programs in literature for elementary

children, the paucity of adequate literary materials in conventional basal reading programs, and the substandard selections from literature in conventional high school curricula have recently been attacked. Conditions are already improving, however; elementary schools are introducing programs in literature for children; new elementary school readers include far more literary content than the old; high school anthologies have been substantially improved by weeding out the peripheral and dull selections; and the paperback revolution in the publishing industry has provided schools with extensive and relatively inexpensive resources for literature of quality which allow great latitude and imaginative planning.

Traditionally, elementary schools have introduced literature as only one aspect of the program in reading or have relegated it to being merely enrichment for other subjects, such as social studies. These approaches can be justified in part and almost certainly will continue. But most curriculum leaders today feel a compelling need to organize developmental programs in literature for children, programs designed to introduce literature for its own sake, for its inherent cultural values, and for the delight which it conveys.

Effective curriculum planning in the elementary schools begins with attempts to increase children's enjoyment and understanding of literature of many kinds. Instruction to help boys and girls learn to critically analyze well chosen works also is important, but such instruction must be so planned as to enhance appreciation rather than to kill it. Providing extensive opportunity for personal reading from the abundance of worthwhile literature for children is crucial throughout primary and intermediate levels and even more so in junior high school, when most people will read more books than at any other time in their lives. Thus the development of organized programs in literature for the first eight grades emerges as an important curriculum need and a trend which is evident today.

Model programs to encourage further change are being tested in the schools. For example, a sequence for grades 1-12 has been developed by the curriculum study center at the University of Nebraska. The sequence introduces children to representative literary genres: parables, fables, picaresque tales, myths and epics, comedies, poetry, and romances are presented throughout the curriculum; increasingly complex selections appropriate to the age and interests of the children are introduced every two or three years to achieve a cumulative effect.

Another approach stresses the education of the imagination.

The child not only reads stories, dramas, and poems, but also tells them or acts them out. Personal experience and creativity, involvement, and engagement are vital ingredients. Less attention to reasoning and the analytic skills at an early age and to the acquisition of knowledge about literature are characteristic of this second approach.

Still a third model for the elementary curriculum supports wide personal reading by direct study of the elements of literature: character, theme, plot, style, diction, tone, and figurative language.

Differing in emphasis, the paradigms are similar in stressing a common core of literary experiences as central to educating the imagination of children. However these common experiences are achieved, their quality and richness are as important in elementary as they are in secondary education. Insistence on quality does not mandate rigid teaching of a fixed list of books. The extensive resources of literature in English and literature in translation are available to both teachers and students. Valuable annotated book lists and collections of appropriate reading should be available in every school library, textbook room, and English classroom. From such resources teachers can select those literary works which promise to offer most to the young people in their classes. Pseudo-literature, potboilers, and pap, writings which communicate no genuine experience and no sense of artistic form, have no place in any program. Under an avalanche of adverse criticism, classroom use of adapted or rewritten versions and snippets or bits of longer literary works—whether of children's literature or standard classics—is disappearing. A good, well-written contemporary work appropriate to the interests and abilities of a child can provide far more genuine experience in literature than does a rewritten classic, no matter how venerable.

Although specialists in English agree on no canon of literary works which all children must read and there is no likelihood that they will, they do agree that programs should incorporate literature of many kinds. Some literary forms have clearly been neglected; recent study of high school literature anthologies, for example, indicated that an average of only 2.7 percent of the content of those books is devoted to the essay(5). Also, recent recognition of the importance of the myths and folktales, which form the background of allusion for other adult works of literature, has created an impetus to introduce such genres in elementary programs. This reading, however, should supplement, not replace, the reading of such superb modern works for children as *Charlotte's Web* and *Make Way for Ducklings*.

To achieve a well balanced program, teachers must assign priorities. Because of the scope of literature, most students will have gaps in their reading, but better readers at least should have some contact with classic myths; Arthurian tales; stories from the Old Testament; parables from the New Testament; Shakespeare; major New England writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne; and representative modern writers like Robert Frost, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and George Orwell. Because no national curriculum compels the teaching of specific titles, teachers should not assume that "anything goes"!

How, then, should literary works be selected? The prevailing sentiment is that the literature program in every school should be arrived at through a consensus of the English teachers, at least a consensus of those teachers informed about both literature and the available literary resources, sensitive to the individual readers, and knowledgeable about contemporary criticism and the newer practices of teaching literature to young people. Only if teachers know why they teach each selection are they likely to be responsible and effective. As the Commission on English writes, "To accept the fact of unavoidable variety is merely to recognize that curriculums in literature must respond to the needs and interests of teachers and students in varying communities and in changing times. In the individual curriculum of a particular school—or of a school system—the achievable consensus on literature finds its center." (4, p. 46)

Significant imaginative experiences in the classroom are apparent, too, in programs for the non-college-bound student. The excessive emphasis on the technical, "practical," and scientific which has characterized many English programs for "the lower tracks," is yielding as educators realize that oral reading and interpretation by the teacher of selections which pupils cannot read on their own will excite the imaginations of such young people. Further, the literature of the film can evoke significant and surprising aesthetic response. The curriculum study center at Hunter College has developed a three-year sequence of literary units for disadvantaged boys and girls in grades 7 to 9. For young people whose access to aesthetic and cultural achievement is sometimes limited by restrictive social environments, the education of the imagination can provide significant release.

For some decades teachers have concerned themselves with whether arrangement of selections by historical period, by theme or topic, by genre, by author, or by individual work might offer the

greatest teaching possibility. Each approach has its dangers; each its own possibilities. All are being used effectively with some students today, though direct emphasis on literary history or thematic organization seems less in favor now.

More important than any particular system of organization is the attention given to individual selections. The unique quality and instructional demands of the work itself and the relationship of the work to the student should govern what is done in the classroom. Careful reading of a particular text with close attention to the interrelationship of idea and form and language is fundamental. Historical and biographical matters, background information often overstressed in programs of the past, can then be introduced as necessary to illuminate the reading of the text. Newer programs do not present a steady diet of such information.

The literary work itself is the center of study. Recognition of the cruciality of the text has led to a de-emphasis on coverage and to stress on close reading of a smaller number of selections with extensive personal reading following class study. Such literary pieces are taught in their entirety so that readers may sense their total impact. Historical surveys of English and American literature, even geographic surveys of world literature, are less important than concentration on literature itself.

But the close reading of literary texts will never promote lifetime habits of reading until schools find better ways to encourage wide personal reading. Indeed, attention to close reading alone may restrict the interests of individuals as well as their freedom in book selection. Thus, supplementary textbooks, small sets of books for group reading, classroom book collections, and improved school libraries are needed for modern programs. Library corners in elementary classrooms, special reading rooms and reading hours in the secondary school, and efforts to bring the "outside" reading inside—these are significant new developments. Research and experience have convinced many teachers that young people will develop permanent appreciation only with the opportunity to expand their interests. As T. S. Eliot once wrote, "Wide reading is valuable because in the process of being affected by one powerful personality after another, we cease to be dominated by any one, or by any small number."

Another trend in teaching literature is to a renewed interest in oral literature. To all students, not only to the disadvantaged, teacher readings of myths, fables, and fairy tales provide an important source of aesthetic pleasure. Moreover, oral interpretation

is virtually a necessity in dealing with genres meant to be read aloud, such as poems and plays. Creative dramatics, role playing, and dramatic improvisation also stimulate active response to literary expression and contribute to the development of sensitivity.

Administrators and curriculum specialists have long worried about the need to integrate the learning of many parts of the curriculum. The interdisciplinary relationship of all art forms is reflected in new humanities courses, many of which provide contrastive and comparative experiences in literature, art, and music. The study of films as literature, an art form developed in this century, seems likely to open new opportunities for the study of modern drama. Recent attention to the emerging English-language literatures of Africa and Australia communicates to young people a sense of the urgency and universality of the literary experience. Our new programs in literature introduce young readers to some of the best literature of our time and to some of the best of all time, striving always to cultivate heightened taste and interest in reading.

Emerging Methods of Instruction in English

New content for English programs has demanded new methods of instruction. English, more than most fields of study, has felt the impact of new theories of teaching and learning. As a consequence, at least five basic trends are apparent.

The learning of English is now seen largely as a process of inquiry and discovery. In placing greater emphasis upon the intellectual development of children, teachers have become increasingly aware of fundamental mental processes. Learning in English becomes learning to compose rather than learning about composition, learning to engage in literary experience rather than learning facts about literature, learning to manipulate the elements of the English sentence rather than learning isolated principles and rules of grammar. The Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board in its final report says that the fundamental goal of English in the high school is "criticism," and by this the Commission intends substantially more than criticism of literature or language. Rather it intends the development of a critical and evaluative attitude toward literature and toward life itself. Learning in English becomes the learning of the processes of criticism.

This change in perception requires the establishment of criteria for judging learning different from mere reliance on the number of correct answers on a weekly spelling test or a quiz on the author's

life and times. Instead, the processes of learning English are emphasized: students learn how to spell rather than memorize spellings, how to read books and discover what is in books of varying kinds, how to respond critically to a Shakespearean drama rather than recall a collection of facts about the work and its background.

The quality and the depth of each learning experience are important, the extent to which it reaches the intellectual base of the learner and cuts through to his emotional, psychological, and philosophical consciousness. Our classrooms for this new English should be remembered not as places where 50 sentences were diagrammed each day or 50 facts about the French Revolution memorized as a result of reading *A Tale of Two Cities,* but rather as places where young writers first discovered how unity brings effectiveness to communication and where they were brought to the edges of their seats with excitement about the inferential qualities of words.

New approaches to learning English concentrate on concepts related to the "structure of the subject" and avoid attempting to cover the entire field. In English as in other subject fields, knowledge is being generated rapidly. Consequently, more and more, programs are designed to help the student discover basic unifying ideas which offer insight into the nature of the discipline (or the several disciplines of literature, language, and rhetoric). Through study of significant examples, rather than through broad coverage, the learner may gain sufficient understanding to make it possible for him to cope with future knowledge.

In language, too, selectivity of content is important. New programs for grammatical instruction restrict attention to fundamental insights, introduced in a careful sequence. One attractive feature of transformational grammar, for example, is its reduction of most English sentences to a few basic patterns. Furthermore, the study of linguistic history and geography focuses on basis concepts which assist young people in understanding historical changes in language and varieties of language they will later encounter on their own.

New methods of teaching English require a variety of learning and teaching materials. Learning today provides seriously for anticipated differences in individuals, involves the full repertoire of linguistic processes, and depends upon intelligent use of a great variety of materials. If young people are to read extensively on their own, strong school libraries are essential—at an invitational national conference, high school English chairmen called for book collections of 500 titles for every English class(14, pp. 13-14).

Important, too, is a more diversified supply of textbook materials, especially a wide range of supplementary textbooks suitable for group and individual use.

But more than books and printed materials are needed in a modern English classroom. The overhead projector, record player, and tape recorder (perhaps equipped with earphones for use by groups within the classroom) enable teachers to use promising visual and auditory means for providing linguistics and literary experiences. In the presentation of sample passages for the study of composition, transparencies shown on the overhead projector have long demonstrated their unique value. Also widely used to extend the experiences of children are motion pictures, filmstrips, slide projectors, and television receivers.

Possible uses of educational technology are promised by new experimental programs such as programed individual drills on English usage presented orally through specially designed machines, the use of programed instruction for the expansion of language patterns, individual listening carrels for recorded experiences in literature, computerized instruction in basic reading skills or in the mechanics of English, and short, single-concept cartridge films for reinforcement of classroom learning.

The time devoted to English studies varies with individual need. The learning of language, so central in man's behavior, is affected by a constellation of factors: the learner's social and cultural background, his motivation and capacity, psychological and emotional factors, and the context provided for learning. Individual differences in the learning of any subject are considerable; in language, they are probably greatest of all. Of all the subjects taught in the schools, English least lends itself to the traditional age-grade sequence of progression.

To achieve necessary flexibility to accommodate individual differences, time adjustments are being made in the school day. For example, programs in which slower students devote twice as many hours to English as do their more advanced peers are not uncommon. Flexibility is further achieved through independent study for able students. For disadvantaged children or those learning English as a second language, special pattern practice in English language laboratories can be assigned. Seminars and tutorial sessions also enable teachers to tailor instruction to individuals. English laboratory periods can be scheduled in specially equipped classrooms supplied with books and equipment for individual study and work such as typewriters, self-instructional aids, reference

works, writing tables, and reading areas, which provide centers for instruction. Reduced teaching loads and flexible schedules release teachers for conferences with individual students. For more than a decade, national studies of the teaching load of secondary teachers of English have recommended not more than four classes or 100 students per teacher; concern over the pupil load of elementary teachers also seems to be growing. In short, new patterns of administrative scheduling and staff utilization, planned in relation to the needs of learners and nature of the subject, offer possibilities for redesigning the teaching of English.

The interrelated content and skills of English must be taught in a continuous, unified program. Recent reappraisals of the curriculum in English, from preschool to college levels, suggest the need for an integrated sequence from beginning reading instruction based on children's own oral language through writing instruction that gains strength from the reading of literature and discussion experiences in oral language sparked by the reading program to studies of rhetorical principles which apply to both oral and written discourse. In the future, focus will be on particular skills and content at different levels and for different children, but this attention will not be so exclusive as to constitute neglect of other outcomes.

A continuous developmental program in general English is a first priority. Such a program would be provided all students and might embrace the first 10 years of education; it should provide for the spiral reteaching of basic skills not only in English classes but in all subjects, reinforced by all teachers. A second-phase program, appropriate for schools which have begun this minimal program even when it is not fully in force, is the establishment of small classes to meet special needs—corrective reading classes, advanced reading instruction for the able, honors work, and special instruction in writing and speech. In increasing numbers of schools, the final years of English provide diversified courses appropriate to individual pupil goals: intensive study of literature and expository writing for some, opportunities for creative expression for others; assured work in language and literature for vocational students; interest courses in humanities; technical, journalistic, and scientific writing; and speech and theatre work.

But before these final years, English should be regarded as a unified subject, taught as a unified subject, presented with appropriate attention to the general language development of each child. This means that teachers of English at any level can no longer neglect the teaching of reading and teaching of speech; it means

also that specialized instruction in reading or writing or detailed attention to spelling, vocabulary, and English usage will be a strength only if related to a carefully designed overall developmental program.

The Case for an Intelligent Pluralism

This, then, is English teaching today: a profession aware of modern psychological theory, concerned with contemporary scholarship in literature and language, seeking more economical ways to teach important concepts and skills in the classroom, and exploring new avenues to learning. The explosion in curriculum development, promoted by almost thirty regional curriculum study centers; the changes in teacher education stimulated by NDEA English institutes for advanced study; the upheaval in publishing created by American technology—all promise ideas, personnel, and materials capable of transforming the teaching of English, the nation's largest educational enterprise, into dynamic new programs for tomorrow's youth. During the next few years, our elementary and secondary schools will encounter more attractive alternatives for new curricula, more information from scholarship and research, and a greater array of competing choices than could possibly have been imagined a few years ago. Faced with conditions which will demand intelligent pluralistic planning, school administrators hopefully may find the outline of trends and possibilities in this report useful as a guide in curriculum planning.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bennett, Robert A., editor. *Summary Progress Report of English Curriculum Study and Demonstration Centers.* Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966.
2. Braddock, Richard; Lloyd-Jones, Richard; and Schoer, Lowell. *Research in Written Composition.* Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963.
3. Brown, Kenneth L. "Notes on an Analysis of the Speech and Listening Content of Selected Pupil Textbooks in the Language Arts for the Elementary School: Grades Three Through Six." Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Association of America, December 1965. (Mimeo.)
4. College Entrance Examination Board, Commission on English. *Freedom and Discipline in English.* New York: the Board, 1965.
5. Commission on the English Curriculum. *Language Arts for Today's Children.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954.
6. Corbin, Richard. *The Teaching of Writing in Our Schools.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1966.
7. Corbin, Richard, and Crosby, Muriel, editors. *Language Programs for*

the Disadvantaged. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965.

8. Dusel, William J. "Determining an Efficient Teaching Load in English." *Illinois English Bulletin*, March 1956.
9. Frazier, Alexander, editor. *Ends and Issues: 1965-1966 Points of Decision in the Development of the English Curriculum*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966.
10. Frazier, Alexander, editor. *New Directions in Elementary English*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967.
11. Goldstein, Miriam B. *The Teaching of Language in Our Schools*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1966.
12. Hogan, Robert F., editor. *The English Language in the School Program*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966.
13. Holbrook, David. *English for the Rejected*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
14. Lacampagne, Robert, editor. *High School Departments of English: Their Organization, Administration, and Supervision*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964.
15. Lynch, James J., and Evans, Bertrand. *High School English Textbooks: A Critical Examination*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1963.
16. Mackintosh, Helen K., editor. *Children and Oral Language*. Champaign, Ill.: ACEI, ASCD, IRA, NCTE, 1964.
17. National Council of Teachers of English, Committee on National Interest. *The National Interest and the Continuing Education of Teachers of English*. Champaign, Ill.: the Council, 1964.
18. Reeves, Ruth. *The Teaching of Reading in Our Schools*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1966.
19. Shugrue, Michael F. *How the "New English" Will Help Your Child*. New York: Association Press, 1966.
20. Shuy, Roger W. *Discovering American Dialects*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, in press.
21. Shuy, Roger W., editor. *Social Dialects and Language Learning*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965.
22. Sister M. Judine, editor. *A Guide for Correcting High School Composition*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964.
23. Squire, James R., and Applebee, Roger K. *A Study of English Programs in Selected High Schools Which Consistently Educate Outstanding Students in English*. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Cooperative Research Report No. 1994. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1966.
24. Squire, James R., and Gwynn, Frederick, editors. *Source Book on English Institutes for Elementary Teachers*. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, and New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1965.
25. Steinberg, Erwin R., and others. "The Inductive Teaching of English." *English Journal* 55: 139-57; February 1966.
26. Strickland, Ruth G. "The Contributions of Structural Linguistics to the Teaching of Reading, Writing, and Grammar in the Elementary School." *Bulletin of the School of Education, Indiana University* 40: 19-20; January 1964.